

“In 1999 more students became pregnant in Hartford than graduated from its’ public school system”

Laura Stone, spokeswoman for Breaking the Cycle.

Senior Seminar Project

Postponing Sexual Involvement

An early intervention approach to teen
pregnancy prevention

Amanda Berger
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Research Question

- How is the program Postponing Sexual Involvement playing a role in preventing and educating students on the issue of teen pregnancy?

Thesis

- **Postponing Sexual Involvement, a peer mediation program fosters a learning environment where teens learn to exercise the mindset and courage to resist the present teen culture of such early tendencies towards sexual relationships. Postponing Sexual Involvement is a program that has undertaken the goal of reducing and preventing teen pregnancy in Hartford**

Significance

- In Hartford 458 teens gave birth during 2000. That's enough to fill nearly a quarter of the kindergarten classes during 2005.
- 28% of Hartford 7th Graders report they are having sexual intercourse, increasing to 55% in 9th Grade.
 - Facts from Breaking the Cycle Progress Report, Spring 2002.

Investigation

What are children being taught in the classroom? I came in to contact with PSI

- What is Postponing Sexual Involvement
 - Implemented in Hartford in 1996
 - Run by Breaking the Cycle, in cooperation with Hartford Hospital, St Francis Hospital and Medical Center
 - An abstinence based program, to deter teens from becoming pregnant at a young age
 - Educational Series for 5th Graders
 - Teen Leaders

Goals of PSI

“The primary goal of the PSI curriculum is to help preteens develop healthy attitudes and appropriate skills for managing their sexual behaviors.” (Pamphlet from PSI).

Four Goals

- To intensify community Determination to end teen pregnancy
- Eliminate births to adolescents younger than 15 by 2005.
- Reduce births to adolescents ages 15-17 by 50% from 1999 to 2005
- Reduce births to adolescents ages 18-19 by 25% from 1999 to 2005.

Methodology

- Contact with PSI, Bulkeley High School
 - Interview Gretchen Levitz
 - Interview with Aneela Kazmi
 - Attended sessions led by Teen Leaders in different 5th grade classrooms
 - Participated in close non obtrusive observation.

My goal was to see what role the program was playing in the classroom, and how the information was being presented and processed by the 5th grade students.

What is the PSI Motto?

“At our age,
It’s okay to think about sex,
It’s okay to talk about sex,
It’s okay to develop feelings and attitudes
about sex,
But it’s NOT okay to have sex!”

(Postponing Sexual Involvement Motto)

Findings from Primary Sources

- 5th graders expressed interest and were attentive
- The role of Teen Leaders is crucial
 - Teen leaders also develop own self confidence
- Cultivates a safe environment-Significance of the Question Box
- Provide resources and encourage communication

Findings from Secondary Sources

- Articles from the Hartford Courant
- Breaking the Cycle Progress Reports
- Hartford Action Plan on Infant Health Annual Repots, 1999 and 2000
- Postponing Sexual Involvement Curriculum

Conclusion

- The program takes a proactive stance
- Educating the students
- Encouraging self confidence
- Promotes communication
- A hands-on approach
- Deals with questions and concerns that are not answered at home